

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings October 2016
Communications Portfolio
Department of Communications and the Arts

Question No: 4

Program 1.1

Hansard Ref: Page 12, 18/10/2016

Topic: Digital Productivity – Report IT use and Productivity

Senator O'Neill, Deborah asked:

Senator O'NEILL: I understand that the function for digital productivity was transferred out of the department in September 2015.

Ms O'Loughlin: That is correct.

Senator O'NEILL: Can you explain to me, then, why the department in February 2016 published a 116 page report on IT use and productivity?

Ms O'Loughlin: From memory, that report had been developed in the department for a considerable length of time. As it was ready to go, and through discussions with our colleagues in the innovation department, we settled the report and we published it, because we thought it would be useful information to be made available publicly.

Senator O'NEILL: Could you indicate to me the date when that project was initiated?

Ms O'Loughlin: I will have to take that on notice. I can probably come back to you later today of that.

Senator O'NEILL: That would be good. Could you also undertake to provide, if possible today, the cost and the time associated with the preparation and publication of that report?

Ms O'Loughlin: Yes.

Senator O'NEILL: AusTender contract notice CN3363608, entitled 'Digital Productivity Project'. What is this for?

Ms O'Loughlin: It is probably related to the report that you mentioned earlier, but I would have to take that on notice.

Senator O'NEILL: If you can. Also, the contract period for that was 15 July 2016 to 31 December 2016. But the report that we have just been talking about, which you said you assisted your colleagues in innovation with, was actually published in February 2016.

Ms O'Loughlin: If I can take that on notice I will come back with information on that, perhaps under program 1.1 later this morning.

Answer:

1. The project "IT use and Australia's Productivity: Where are we now?" ran from September 2014 until December 2015, and was substantially completed prior to the machinery of government changes in September 2015. The report was published on 8 February 2016. Consultant costs for the project were \$150,407.13 (GST exc) and there were some internal staff costs.
2. There is a separate 'Digital Productivity Project' that commenced in June 2016 and is expected to conclude in December 2016. Consultant costs are expected to be \$14,000 (GST exc) and there are some internal staff costs.